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THE EZRA STORY IN ITS ORIGINAL SEQUENCE

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Any attempt to "restore the original form" of an ancient document, by rearranging its chapters, paragraphs, or verses, ought to be met with suspicion and subjected to the severest criticism. In the great majority of cases, either the traditional form can fairly claim to be the original one, in spite of seeming contradictions, or else the evidence enabling us to make a *sure* restoration is not to be had. Many of the grave inconsistencies which trouble us did not disturb the author himself, simply because he understood, better than we do, what he meant to say. Even where it is a demonstrated fact that the text which lies before us has suffered from transposition of some sort, it is not enough for the would-be restorer to rearrange the passages logically, or symmetrically, or so as to bring the whole into perfect accord with some plausible theory. Very many ancient writers did not bind themselves to observe logical sequence; did not care especially for symmetry; and would have been greatly astonished, or angered, or amused, if they could have heard attributed to them the views which they are now believed to have held. It is not our concern, after all, to find the best possible arrangement of the material—that would often be very easy; our business is to find the arrangement actually made by the author—and that is usually very difficult. Nevertheless, perfectly convincing reconstructions by transposition, based solely on internal evidence, are sometimes possible; the history of literature contains a good many instances. In each case it is simply a question of whether the evidence can satisfy the rigorous tests which the nature of the problem demands. The proposed new arrangement must really remove the difficulties which it is designed to overcome; it must create no new difficulties; it must enable us to explain how the disorder was brought about; it must give clear evidence of being the order originally planned

by the author himself, and must harmonize with all that we certainly know regarding his purposes and methods; and it must be recognized as the *only* order which can meet these requirements. If any single link in the chain of evidence is missing, or defective, the critical theory may be tolerated, but it cannot be accepted as demonstrated. I am confident that it will be agreed that the demonstration given in the following pages is a conclusive one, and that this is a case in which the original order of a disarranged narrative has been restored with certainty.

In all the narrative part of the Old Testament, there is nowhere else such an appearance of chaos as in the story of Ezra, as it stands in our received text. Part of it is found in one place, and part in another. Moreover, the two principal fragments, thus separated from each other, are incoherent in themselves. No one of our modern interpreters has succeeded in obtaining a continuous and comprehensible account of events from either Ezr. 7-10 or Neh. 8-10. The sequence of the several scenes is plainly out of order; the chronology is all wrong; and the bearing of the successive (?) incidents upon one another is far from clear. Ezra makes his journey to Judea in order to teach and administer the law (Ezr. 7:10, 14, 25 f.), but it is not until thirteen years (!) after his arrival that he first presents it to the people (Neh. 8:2, cf. 1:1 and Ezr. 7:8). In Ezr. 9, the people are rebuked for a grievous sin against the law, the manner of the rebuke implying obviously that the law was already known to them; and their representative, indeed, after confessing the transgression, proposes to make reparation "*according to the law*" (10:3).¹ But in the narrative as it now lies before us, the

¹ That the public reading of the law had already taken place, is necessarily implied not only in 10:3, but also, and only a little less obviously, in 9:1, 4, 10 ff., 14. The "commandments of God," which the people had "forsaken" and "broken," were the commandments of the written law; they could not possibly have been anything else. Those who "trembled at the words of the God of Israel" (9:4, 10:3) were those who were dismayed at the transgression of statutes which were definitely known to them; the context in each case makes this certain. Bertholet, in his remarks on Ezr. 9:1 (*Comm.*, pp. 38 f.), declares that Ezra's reform in the matter of foreign wives was "vorbereitet durch die Gedankenwelt des Deuteronomiums, eines Hesekiel, Maleachi und Tritojesaja," but this is a very lame explanation. It is sufficiently obvious that when Ezra tore his clothes, pulled out some of the hair of his head and beard, and spoke and prayed in such passionate language of the "great guilt" of the people, he was not reproaching them for a sin against a *Gedankenwelt*! In order to argue in this way, it is necessary that one should first shut his eyes. It is not only said, in so many words (10:3), that the people already know the

law had not yet been made known! Furthermore, although this evil of mixed marriages is discovered and corrected soon after Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem, the time when the people formally repent of it, in solemn assembly, and vow never to do so again, is thirteen years later (Neh. 9:1).

The manifest incongruity between Neh. 8 and the two following chapters has also been the subject of much comment. There is nothing in the narrative as it now stands which can account for the sackcloth and ashes in 9:1. Or it would be a more correct statement of the case to say, that the reason for the mourning is given, but is incomprehensible in the present form of the story. Kosters, *Wiederherstellung Israels* (1895), pp. 85 f., remarks that the occasion of the penitential ceremony in chap. 9 was, plainly, the separation of Israel from foreigners. This is indeed made evident by the two passages, 9:2 and 10:29-31; the former of which must necessarily be regarded, because of its position, as giving the principal reason for the assembly, while the other, for a like reason, must be held to give the primary feature of the solemn covenant.² Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte*¹, p. 135, n. 2, feels the same difficulty as Kosters, and says: "Wunderlich an seiner Stelle ist der erste Satz von Neh. 9:2." But Wellhausen certainly would not wish to suggest that the first clause of this verse is not in its

Torah, the fact is also certainly implied in the account of the way in which they received Ezra's rebuke (10:2 ff., 12 ff.). In Neh. 8:9, 13 it is made plain that the commandments of the law were quite new to all, princes, priests, and common people alike, when Ezra first read them. In Ezra 9 and 10, on the contrary, the people accept as indisputable the charge that they have grievously transgressed; they themselves know what commandments have been broken; and Ezra in his prayer for them actually quotes (loosely) the words of Lev. 18:24 f., 27, Deut. 7:3, 23:7, 11:8. This was a part of that law which he had come to teach—and had already taught. What is more, it was not Ezra who discovered this "trespass of the exiles," it was certain of their own leaders. 9:1 says: "When these things were finished, the chief men drew near to me, saying: The people of Israel . . . have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land," etc., and these princes thereupon *proceed to quote from the laws in question* (vss. 1, 2)! This is either the sequel of Neh. 8, or else it is inexplicable.

² No neater demonstration of this exegetical necessity could be asked than is furnished by the "Neapolitan Synopsis" of the Old Testament, published by Lagarde in his *Septuaginta Studien* II. The following is its summary of that part of the Ezra narrative which is contained in the book of Nehemiah (*ibid.*, p. 84, ll. 27-34): . . . καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἑσδρας ἀναγινώσκων διέστειλεν ἐπιστήμῃ κυρίου, ὃ δὲ λαὸς συνῆκεν ἐν τῇ ἀναγνώσει. καὶ ἐποίησε τὸ πάσχα. καὶ ἐν τῷ ἑβδόμῳ μηνὶ ἐποίησε τὴν νηστείαν καὶ τὴν σκηνοπηγίαν ὡς γέγραπται. . . . Ἑσδρας δὲ ἑωρακὼς ἐπιμειγείας γυναίκας ἁγίων τοῖς Ἑβραίοις, πενήσας, ἔπεισε πάντας ἐπαγγεῖλασθαι φυλάττειν τὸν νόμον τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἐξέβαλε τὰς γυναῖκας ὡς παράνομον γάμον. καὶ ὡμοσαν φυλάξαι τὸν νόμον.

right place in the chapter. The trouble is, of course, that the preceding narration has not prepared the way for such a scene as this. That is, just as Ezr. 9 must have been preceded by an account of the public reading of the law, so Neh. 9 must have followed directly after a chapter which told of the separation from foreign wives.

And just here the fact also stares us in the face that the story of Ezra's reform is not suitably concluded by Ezr. 10:44, even when the verse is restored to its original form (see below). We should expect to see at least some promise for the future, some indication that the misery, the crime against human nature, wrought on this occasion made such an impression on the people that they took measures to prevent the recurrence of anything of the sort. The subject could not have been dismissed with this one verse following the list of names. No modern commentator has doubted that the original narrative continuation has been accidentally cut off, or displaced, in some way.

It is abundantly evident, from all this, that the trouble with the story of Ezra lies simply in the transposition of a passage, namely the passage which contains the account of the reading of the law. Aside from the internal evidence, we have also external evidence that transposition of some sort took place, for in the old Greek version (I Esdras) and Josephus the four Ezra chapters (7-10) are immediately followed by the three Nehemiah chapters (8-10).³ The sequence of the chapters there is an absolutely impossible one, to be sure, yet this witness to the tradition that all seven of them originally formed one continuous piece is very valuable.

The obvious way of removing all the difficulties thus far mentioned is, as I showed in my *Composition*, pp. 29-34, to restore Neh. 8 to its original place between Ezr. 8 and 9. The key to the solution of the whole problem lies in the neglected and misunderstood passage Neh. 7:70-73 (69-72). If it had not been for these four verses, the disarrangement of the Ezra story would never have taken place; in consequence, the restoration of the true order must begin with them. As soon as the peculiarities of

³ See above, XXIII, 136 f.

their form and surroundings are observed, it becomes evident that they furnish the desired explanation of the whole process. All modern interpreters have regarded Neh. 7:70-73 as a mere variant of Ezr. 2:68-70. Some ancient interpreter conceived the same idea, and wrought great mischief as a result. As a matter of fact, the two passages differ considerably in their contents, and were written for very different occasions. Why the remarkable disagreement between them, and who has ever explained it? There is a third passage, I Chron. 29:6-8, which resembles them almost as closely as they resemble each other, and all three simply illustrate the Chronicler's well-known habit of repeating himself.

We have already seen that the narrative of the first public reading of the law, which is the immediate sequel of the four verses mentioned, must have preceded Ezr. 9. That being the case, it is startling to observe that the four verses are the natural continuation of Ezr. 8. That is, in fact, the *only* context which suits them. Ezr. 8:33-36 had just recounted how the gifts of gold and silver brought from Babylon were delivered in Jerusalem, where they were to be used "for the service of the house of God" (7:19, 8:25); how the sacrifices were then offered in the temple; and how, finally, the king's satraps and governors in the Transflumen gave their aid to the cult in Jerusalem (8:36). Then would follow, almost of necessity, some statement regarding the aid which the leaders of the Jews themselves gave to the service of the temple (לְמַלְאכָה, Neh. 7:70). This is precisely what we have in Neh. 7:70-72. Furthermore, the statement that "the priests, the Levites, and the people," and so on, those who had come from Babylonia, settled down "in their cities" (vs. 73a) is just as indispensable at the end of the story of the expedition under Ezra (Ezr. 8) as it was in the case of that under Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezr. 2). To sum the matter up, the passage Neh. 7:70-73 is necessary as the sequel of Ezr. 8; while it is quite out of place in the story of Nehemiah, and inexplicable as a variant of Ezr. 2:68-70.

It is evident, then, that if we should cut out the whole passage Neh. 7:70(69)—8:18 from its present context, and put it between Ezr. 8 and 9, every difficulty resulting from the present order of

chapters and sections in the Ezra story would disappear. In addition to the points already mentioned, the sore need of a sequel to Ezr. 10:44 and of a suitable context for Neh. 9:1f. would also be supplied, the one chapter being followed directly by the other. The probability that we have found at last the passage whose transposition brought about all the mischief in Ezra-Nehemiah becomes at once very strong.

But it is first necessary to show why and how the transfer was made, and how it happened that a part of the Ezra story was put into the book of Nehemiah. The mistaken arrangement was made by a copyist; and as already observed, the resemblance of the passage Neh. 7:70-73 to its counterpart Ezr. 2:68-70 was the cause of the error. The two passages would inevitably seem to a copyist to be one and the same, with their generally identical phraseology;⁴ and what is more, each is immediately continued by the words: "And when the seventh month was come, the children of Israel being in their cities, the people assembled." The man who wrought the mischief, therefore, holding in his memory the continuation of the "great list" Ezr. 2:2-67 by verses 68-70 and 3:1, attached the similar passage, with its sequel, the story of the reading of the law, to the end of the same list in Nehemiah. He had just copied, we may suppose, the book of Ezra as far as 8:36, and then saw in the next following section what he believed to be the true sequel of the list in Neh. 7. He accordingly transferred the section, which of course included the story of the reading of the law (cf. Neh. 7:73b and the beginning of 8:1 with Ezr. 3:1!), to the book of Nehemiah.⁵

⁴ The mention of the "Tirshatha" in Neh. 7:70 would also immediately suggest the occurrence of the word just before, in vs. 65 (Ezr. 2:63)!

⁵ Such transpositions, more or less consciously made, are familiar enough in the history of the manuscript transmission of ancient documents. It sometimes happens, indeed, that transcribers perform feats which might well have been deemed impossible. For example, in the manuscripts of the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary, immediately after John 8:2 stands a colophon, "*End of the Gospel of John*," etc.! The explanation is presumably this, that in some old manuscripts of the Gospels the pericope *de adultera*, 7:53-8:11, was placed at the end as a sort of appendix, and that in at least one such codex the transposed section contained merely 8:3-11 (cf. the transposition of Neh. 7:73 ff., instead of vs. 70 ff., in I Esdras!). Then, in the Syriac manuscript from which the text of the Lectionary was derived, this appendix, 8:3-11, was again transferred, this time being put back into what was naturally supposed to be its original place (cf. I Esdras). But along with it was transferred the colophon of the Gospel, which stood just before it! (See the

This transfer was an easy one, requiring hardly any thought at all; but when it was once made it was certain to be permanent, at least so far as the verses 70-73a were concerned, since they would henceforth always be regarded as a mere repetition of Ezr. 2:68-70. Moreover, the transfer—and this was possibly not foreseen at first by the one who made it—rendered a second transposition absolutely necessary. The chapters containing the story of the people's repentance, and of the covenant which they made, alluded in more than one place to *the public reading of the law by Ezra* (Neh. 9:3, 10:29 f., 35, 37), and it was therefore obviously and totally impossible that they should precede Neh. 8. The only thing that could be done with them was to put them immediately after the last-named chapter. There can be little doubt that this was done by the same copyist-editor who had begun the rearrangement—for he cannot have failed to see the necessity of this second step; but whether by him or by another, it must in any case have been accomplished very soon. Thus it came about that the "great list" in Neh. 7 received this most incongruous sequel: the account of the gifts to the temple on Ezra's arrival (Neh. 7:70-73a); the reading of the law (73b-8:18); and the two chapters (Neh. 9 f.) which had originally formed the end of the Ezra story, immediately preceding the first chapter of Nehemiah. Ezr. 9 and 10 were of course left where they were, as the account of the work performed by Ezra in his "first period." Thus the books of Ezra and Nehemiah received their present shape,⁶ by a process each step of which is perfectly comprehensible. The first step was almost mechanical, and might even have been purely accidental; the rest then followed inevitably.

The date of this transposition of chapters was probably near the end of the third century B. C., at about the time when the Story of the Three Youths was interpolated in the first chapter

Palest. Syr. Lect., ed. Lewis and Gibson, p. xv, where an explanation similar to this is given on the authority of Rendel Harris.) This is by no means an isolated instance of the stupidity of a copyist.

⁶The mixing of the Ezra story with that of Nehemiah naturally brought about the interpolation of Nehemiah's name in certain passages where "the governor" was mentioned. On the form and history of these interpolations see below, the notes on Neh. 8:9 and (especially) 10:2.

of Ezra, as already described. For some reason which we can only conjecture,⁷ the rearranged edition completely supplanted the original one. Not long after, some one made the attempt to restore the Ezra chapters to the book of Ezra; it was a matter of tradition that they had once formed a part of it. The best that he could do, naturally, was to chop out Neh. 7:73 (!)—10:40, and put it between Ezr. 10:44 and Neh. 1:1; and this did not by any means remove the existing difficulties. His version gained such acceptance, however, that it was the standard recension at least from the early part of the second century B. C. until the time of the historian Josephus (cf. what I have said in regard to "Edition B" in the chapter dealing with the Nature and Origin of First Esdras). Even before the time of this last transposition, the interpolation of Nehemiah's name into the three ill-gotten chapters of his book had begun to take place, judging from I Esdr. 5:40 (= Ezr. 2:63), *Νεεμίας* (!) *καὶ Ἀρθαρίας*.⁸ This interpolation was afterward made in other places (already mentioned) in "Edition A," and their presence was doubtless the chief reason why this latter recension was ultimately made authoritative.

I print here the story of Ezra in its original sequence, as the best possible demonstration of the correctness of the conclusions just stated. How does one who is attempting to restore a dissected map or picture know when he has succeeded? The story as here arranged shows perfect order instead of complete chaos, the obvious design of the narrator carried out in a harmonious way from beginning to end. It is the one arrangement to which logic compels, a dozen different lines of argument all pointing in the same direction. And it is the *only* arrangement which can meet all the tests named at the beginning of this chapter. The comparison of the dissected picture is an unjust one in two

⁷ As I have remarked already in several places, the evidence seems to show that the Chronicler's book was little known during the first generation or two after it was written (neither Bar Sira nor the author of Enoch 89:72 had ever heard of Ezra, for example). It may have been a good while before it was copied at all; then when its real vogue began, the copies were made from the rearranged and interpolated edition, which was the *popular* one.

⁸ This means, apparently, that in some text older than Edition B the name "Nehemiah" had been interpolated in Neh. 7:65, and then had been carried over thence, through carelessness, into Ezr. 2:63.

respects, since (1) it suggests numerous pieces, and (2) he who restores the picture has no need to explain the disorder in which he found it. In the case of this narrative, the shifting of one single block, Neh. 7:70—8:18, brings back the original order of the Ezra chapters—a solution whose simplicity puts it in strong contrast with every other one which has been proposed; and the explanation of the displacement, a thing not to be dispensed with, is provided.⁹

Ezra goes to Jerusalem in order to bring back the people to the neglected and forgotten law of their God, i. e. the Pentateuch. He is sent by the king, who gives him full power, and he and his companions carry contributions for the improvement of the temple service. Arriving in Jerusalem, they present their gifts, and the governor and the leaders of the people also contribute liberally. Two months later, at the beginning of the sacred "seventh month," Ezra prepares his great assembly at Jerusalem, and reads the law of Moses in public. The first fruit of the reading (as is fitting) was joy and good cheer, for the people found themselves summoned to undertake at once the celebration of a festival which had been lost to sight. But results of a less pleasant nature were bound to come soon. The restoring of a neglected law means reform. The princes had heard, with dismay, the statute forbidding intermarriage with the heathen, and now come to Ezra to confess the sin of the people. He charges the guilty ones with their crime; they confess, and agree that "the law must be followed" (יַעֲשֶׂה בְּתוֹרָה, Ezr. 10:3). A thorough work of investigation, occupying three

⁹ Professor H. P. Smith, in his *Old Testament History*, adopts my restoration of the Ezra story, but proposes to modify it in one respect, suggesting (p. 393, n. 1) that the list in Neh. 7 also belonged originally to the story of Ezra, Ezr. 8:36 having been continued by Neh. 7:5 ff. What I have written in the preceding pages is perhaps a sufficient answer to such a suggestion, but I will add: (1) There would then be no plausible way of explaining the presence of the chapters in the book of Nehemiah. (2) The passage 7:70-73 would be deprived of any natural connection; and it would look like a mere variant (a very corrupt variant!) of Ezr. 2:68-70. (3) In Ezr. 8 there is no obvious reason for a census; in Neh. 7, on the contrary, vs. 4 prepares for this very thing, and chap. 11 continues it without a break! The Chronicler represents Nehemiah as interested in the census of the community (see also XXIV, pp. 216 f.), and the list there serves an important purpose; while in the Ezra story it could serve no purpose at all. These considerations are quite decisive.

Another Old Testament scholar, Professor H. G. Mitchell, accepts some of my conclusions while rejecting others (*Journal of Bib. Lit.*, 1903, pp. 92 ff.). I think it will be seen that every objection which he raises is fully met in the present chapter. His own hypothesis seems to me to leave both the stories of Ezra and Nehemiah in a hopeless muddle.

months, is instituted, and all the foreign wives and the children born of them are sent away. Then, after a breathing spell of about three weeks, all the people assemble once more at Jerusalem, and the solemn covenant, which crowns the work of Ezra, is drawn up and signed.

Here is a clear and consistent story, the only clear and consistent story dealing with Ezra that has ever been told by any one. That it is the story actually told, in the first place, by the Chronicler himself, is still further attested by *the chronology*. The dates given in such profusion throughout the narrative are now all intelligible for the first time. No other single fact could give so striking a vindication as this of the correctness of my restoration, and for this reason I have printed the successive dates in the margin, so that their mutual relation can be seen at a glance. The "unity of time" in the story also deserves to be emphasized. The initial date of Ezra's undertaking, according to 7: 9, was the first day of the first month,¹⁰ in the seventh year of Artaxerxes;¹¹ that is, April 1,¹² 398 B. C. The whole series of events of which he is the hero¹³ occupies just one year and twenty-four days (cf. Neh. 9: 1 with Ezr. 10: 17). The multiple of twelve is not accidental; notice also how in Ezr. 8: 31 the date of the actual beginning of the journey is given as the twelfth day of the first month. Compare the many similar cases, in all parts of the Chronicler's narrative, which have already been mentioned.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to reiterate, that in all this there is not a word said about the introduction of a new law. What is represented is everywhere and consistently this, that the old law, of whose existence the leaders of the people well knew, and whose main prescriptions they were of course following all the time, but which had been sadly neglected, so

¹⁰ Observe that the Chronicler's date for the beginning of the former expedition, under Cyrus, was also the first day of the first month (above, XXIV, 25).

¹¹ Artaxerxes II Mnemon; see above, p. 204.

¹² Merely for the sake of convenience, I have used this inaccurate terminology, calling the first month "April," and so on throughout the year.

¹³ Of course it is to be remembered that the Chronicler brings him in again for a moment, in very characteristic fashion, in the story of Nehemiah, a dozen years later (12: 36).

that many of its commands were quite forgotten, was now re-instated in its completeness by one who had authority. This, as I have already shown, is one of the Chronicler's favorite ideas, to which he returns again and again, in his history of Israel. See above, especially pp. 203, 214. More than this, the picture of a revival of the law immediately followed, as a result, by a formal covenant entered into by the people, is one which he delights to paint. According to his narrative in II Chron. 14:4, the Judean king Asa restored the law. It had been neglected then in the same manner as in the time of Ezra; the people had no opportunity to read it, and there was no "expert scribe" to teach it to them. As one of the prophets of Asa's kingdom said (15:3): "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and *without a teaching priest*, and without law." After the law had been restored, the people gathered together at Jerusalem (vss. 10-13) and entered into a covenant "to seek the Lord, . . . and that whosoever would not seek the Lord should be put to death." So also in 34:32, after repeating from Kings the story of Josiah's public reading of the law, and of the covenant which the king made, the Chronicler adds: "And he caused all who were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God." In like manner after the first reading of the law by Ezra, when the need of the first great reform is seen, one of the leaders of the people says (Ezr. 10:3): "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all such wives," etc. And then finally, after still another public reading and expounding of the law (Neh. 9:3), the people are represented as signing and sealing a more comprehensive covenant, embracing those things which were commonly neglected, and yet (in the mind of the Chronicler) were of the greatest importance. There is never a hint of such a thing as accepting a new law, only the familiar idea of renewing an old one which had been neglected.¹⁴

¹⁴ Bertholet, *Comm.*, pp. 75 f., argues that a chapter must have fallen out after Neh. 9, namely a chapter telling how the people formally pledged themselves to accept "the new law;" Neh. 10, he insists, cannot be the continuation of chap. 9, because in the covenant which it contains nothing is said about adopting any new code! This is perfectly typical

Before leaving the story of Ezra, the question deserves to be raised once more whether some valuable material, however small, for the history of the Persian period may not be found in it. It is the Chronicler's own tale, his composition from beginning to end, that is certain; but even so, every witness in its favor must be given a fair hearing. I have already shown with sufficient detail of proof, that the whole Ezra narrative is motivated history, composed with the very same purpose which produced the similar narratives written to supplement the accounts of Samuel and Kings; and that there is not a particle of evidence that any other story of Ezra, written or oral, lies behind this one (see above, pp. 204, 208 f.). The only question that can arise is this, whether the Chronicler has not used events or names of persons which can legitimately be received by us as historical material. But the answer to this question, the only answer justified by the evidence, is an unqualified negative. I have remarked elsewhere upon the fact that the Chronicler, in all this tale, recounts no events at all except such as serve his apologetic purpose. What is told of the Ezra expedition is just that which was narrated of the former "return" in Ezr. 1-3: a royal edict; names of the participants; enumeration of vessels for the temple; special mention (for the purpose of praise or blame) of certain men or groups of men; the fact that the several classes duly occupied "their" cities. So also in the next episode: the same magnificent liberality, and told in the same words, in Neh. 7:70-72 as in Ezr. 2:68 f. and I Chron. 29:6 ff. The account of the reading of the law is merely repeated from the Chronicler's story of the dedication of Solomon's temple, in II Chron. 5-7; it is the very same scene, with the same principal incidents (for details, see my *Comp.*, p. 59). All the ideas found in the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, and

of the whole treatment of the Ezra narrative which prevails at present; the rule everywhere followed appears to be this: Let the documents go, but keep the present "critical" theory; never this rule: Let the theory go, but hold to the documents. No part of the Old Testament, in fact, has brought forth so much perverse exegesis as this tale of Ezra. It will doubtless long be customary to cite it as the account of "the introduction of the Priest-code," though this view of it has not the least foundation of any sort. The narrative says nothing of the kind; the laws quoted and accepted in the story *do not belong, as a rule, to the priestly legislation* (read Bertholet, *loc. cit.*, p. 76!); and finally, as I have said elsewhere (XXIV, 270), there is neither evidence nor likelihood that any "Priest-code" ever existed.

most of the phrases in which they are couched, are commonplaces in the Chronicler's history. The story of the reform in the matter of foreign wives differs only in the nature of the case from the stories told by him of the reforms of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah. The manner of the narrative is just the same, and the properties and personages are as nearly identical as they can be. The details introduced by way of embellishment (Ezra's violent manifestations of grief; the storms of rain; the stairs on which the Levites stood, etc.) are like the similar ones found in every part of the earlier history, devised solely with the purpose of giving life to the story, not in order to give it the semblance of truth — and it does not, indeed, sound in the least like truth. And finally, the account of the signing of the covenant is, as I have just shown, one of the Chronicler's specialties, a thing which he brings into his history over and over again. And all the items of the covenant are those which he reiterates elsewhere, in about the same words, in such chapters as II Chron. 31 and Neh. 13.

In all this there is not a word which sounds like popular tradition, nor a single incident which stands outside the direct line of the Chronicler's tendency. As for names of persons and places, what appears to be opulence in this regard is really the extreme of poverty. We have only the same old threadbare stuff, names of "the chief of the people, the priests, and the Levites" which have been paraded in every chapter of the book since the time of Moses. "Ezra" himself is the personification of the Chronicler's interests, completely identical with the Nehemiah of Neh. 13 and (*mutatis mutandis*) with each of the long list of ecclesiastical heroes and reformers created by the Chronicler and introduced by him into his history of the Judean kingdom. It is a most significant fact, among others, that the Chronicler did not know who the governor of Judea was during the first part of the reign of Artaxerxes II. He could not leave him out, and therefore speaks of him simply as "the Tirshatha" in Neh. 7:70, 8:9, and 10:2 (see the note on the last-named passage).¹⁵ He did have at his command, as a matter

¹⁵ It appears to be a similar instance of caution when he employs the term, without the name, in Ezr. 2:63 and Neh. 7:65. The reason for this is obvious. The prophecy of Haggai gives Zerubbabel the title פַּרְוֶה "governor," while the Aramaic tale, incorporated by the Chronicler, says expressly (Ezr. 5:14) that Sheshbazzar was the פַּרְוֶה "governor" of the

of course, a list of the high-priests during the Persian period. Regarding the list, which was probably correct in the main, so far as the names contained in it are concerned, I shall have more to say later. It is uncertain whether he intended the persons named in Ezr. 10:6, "the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib," to belong to the high-priestly line, or not (cf. Neh. 13:4); if that was his intention, so much the worse for his chronology.

Certain words of Bernheim, *Die historische Methode*¹, p. 426, are so nearly applicable to the present case that they are worth quoting. He writes: "In einer eigenthümlichen Lage befindet sich die Kritik manchen Zeugnissen gegenüber, die, einzig in ihrer Art, durch andere Quellen weder positiv noch negativ zu kontrollieren sind, weil aus derselben Zeit, bzw. über dieselben Thatssachen gar keine anderen Quellen erhalten sind, während wir obendrein wissen, dass die Zeugnisse nicht durchweg Zuverlässig sind; . . . und aus einer gewissen Schwäche des Gemüths sind wir geneigt, obwohl wir nicht recht trauen, dieselben gelten zu lassen, solange wir sie nicht kontrollieren können, weil wir gar keine Kenntnis über die betreffenden Thatssachen besitzen, falls wir sie aufgeben." In one respect, indeed, the case before us differs slightly from the one described by Bernheim, in that the documents which he characterizes are "not altogether trustworthy;" while in the writings of the Chronicler we have the work of an author who is well known to us as thoroughly untrustworthy, and, what is far more important, as one who composes history with a motive which is obviously furthered by this very narrative. That being the case, it is plain that no use whatever can be made of any part of the Ezra story as a source for the history of the Jews in the Persian period. The same is of course true of Neh. 7:1-69 and chaps. 11-13, with the solitary exception of the list of high-priests in 12:10 f., 22, where we are able partially to control the Chronicler's statements by the help of other sources.

The translation which here follows is based on an emended text, the reason for the emendation being given in each case.

Jews at the time when the foundation of the temple was laid. In the face of these conflicting statements, there was only one prudent course. It was doubtless from the same motive—caution—that the Chronicler chose the unusual term תִּרְשָׁתָא "Tirshatha." Just as soon as he gets back to firm ground, in Neh. 12:26, he writes "Nehemiah the governor" (הַפְּתִיחַ).

Our massoretic text is in the main excellent, standing probably very close to what the Chronicler himself wrote. The other texts (rendered by I Esdras, Theodotion, and Jerome) are inferior. I have omitted the lists of names and the long prayer in Neh. 9, as not essential to my present purpose, which is to print the narrative as it originally stood.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE EXPEDITION^a

(Ezr. 8:1-36; Neh. 7:70-73a)

Ezr. 8¹ And these are the chief of the fathers,^b and their genealogy, those who went up with me from Babylonia^c in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. ²Of the sons of Phinehas, Ger-shom, . . . etc. (*Then follows, in vss. 2-14, the list, composed in the Chronicler's characteristic manner.*)¹⁵ I assembled them at the river which flows into the Ahava,^d and there we encamped for three days. And I took account of the people,^e and of the priests, but of the sons of Levi I found none there. ¹⁶So I sent Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib,^f Nathan, Zachariah, and Meshullam, chief men; and Joiarib and Elnathan, men of discernment; ¹⁷directing them to Iddo, who was the chief in the place Casiphia. And I instructed them

^aFor a translation of the narrative immediately preceding, see above, XXIV, 279-81.

^bCf. Ezr. 1:5, and especially I Esdr. 5:4. See the texts and annotations given above, XXIV, 12-28.

^c"Babylonia," not "Babylon;" cf. my notes, above, on II Chron. 36:20, Ezr. 5:12, 6:1.

^dThe name is known only from this chapter, and the translation is accordingly uncertain.

^eThe Chronicler has no fixed order of mentioning these three classes: "people (or, 'Israel'), priests, Levites." The order found here occurs very frequently; thus I Chron. 9:2, 23:2, II Chron. 17:7 f. (contrast 19:8), 34:30, 35:8 f., Ezr. 1:5, I Esdr. 4:53 ff., Ezr. 2:2 ff., 6:16, 7:7, 13, 9:1, Neh. 8:13, 10:28, 11:3. See also above, p. 203, note.

^fThe "Elnathan" which follows this name in MT is due to the error of a copyist whose eye strayed to the same pair of names just one line below. Our text is otherwise correct. Cf. with this vs. II Chron. 17:7! The Chronicler's style is not like that of any one else.

what to say to Iddo my brother,^g and to the Nethinim in the place Casiphia, to bring us servants for the house of our God.¹⁸ And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, son of Levi, son of Israel; even^h Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;¹⁹ Also Hashabiah andⁱ Jeshaiah, of the sons of Merari, with their brethrenⁱ and their children, twenty. ²⁰And of the Nethinim, whom David and the princes gave for the service of the Levites: two hundred and twenty Nethinim, all registered by name.

²¹And I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a prosperous journey, for ourselves, our little ones, and all our goods. ²²For I had been ashamed to ask of the king an armed and mounted guard, to protect us from enemies on the way; because we had said to the king: The hand of our God is upon all those who seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath are against all who forsake him. ²³So we fasted, and besought our God for this, and he accepted our prayer.

²⁴And I set apart twelve men of the chief priests, Sherebiah and Hashabiah and ten of their brethren.^k ²⁵And I weighed out for them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels; the offering for the house of our God which the king, and his counselors and princes, and all Israel there present had offered. ²⁶I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and one hundred silver vessels worth talents;¹ one hundred talents of gold; ²⁷twenty bowls of gold worth a thousand

^gIt is obvious that אחי והנתינים must be divided אחי הנתינים.

^hThe occasional use of an "explicative *waw*" in both the Hebrew and the Aramaic of the Greek period is well attested. Cf. my notes, above, on I Esdr. 3:1, 6, Ezr. 6:8, 9; further, I Chron. 28:1, Neh. 8:13, 9:16, 10:29. Theodotion's Hebrew had here ורש באר בניי, instead of ושרביה ובניי.

ⁱReading אחיהם and אחיהם.

^kProbably something has fallen out after the numeral "twelve," either the single word ימיהלרים or else a longer passage. We should expect twelve priests and twelve Levites, cf. vs. 30 and 33. The ל before "Sherebiah" was pretty certainly written by the Chronicler himself.

¹The numeral seems to have fallen out; it must have stood just after the word "talents."

darics;^m and twelve vessels of fine polished bronze,ⁿ precious as gold. ²⁸And I said to them:° Ye are holy unto Yahwè, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to Yahwè the God of your fathers. ²⁹Watch and keep them, until ye weigh them out before the chief priests and Levites and the chief of the fathers of Israel, in Jerusalem, in^p the chambers of the house of Yahwè. ³⁰So the priests and the Levites received the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

April 12 ³¹And we set out from the river Ahava on the twelfth^q day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And the hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the power of the enemy and the lier-in-wait, on the way. ³²So we came to Jerusalem, and there we abode for three days. ³³And on the fourth day the August 1
(See 7:8f.) silver, the gold, and the vessels were weighed in the house of our God, under the direction of Meremoth the son of Uriah, the priest, with whom was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them were Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, the Levites. ³⁴(They received) the whole by number and by weight,^r and all of the weight was written down at that time.

³⁵The children of the exile, those who had just come from the captivity, offered whole burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve he-goats for a sin offering; all this as a whole burnt offering to Yahwè. ³⁶And they delivered the orders of the king to his satraps and the governors of the province Beyond the River;^s

^m The word אֲדָרְכִין, derived from δαρείκος, originated in the Greek period and was formed after the analogy of דֶּרַחְמִין, "drachma." The Chronicler uses it also in I Chron. 29:7.

ⁿ The numeral here was originally עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנִים, as I Esdr. 8:56 (δέκα δύο) shows. See also Josephus, *Antt.* xi, 136. נִחֲשֵׁת is construct state, and מִצְּבָה (a noun, of course, with collective meaning) is probably correct.

° Cf. I Chron. 15:12, II Chron. 29:5, 35:3-6. Very characteristic.

^p The text is slightly corrupt.

^q The Chronicler's favorite number, again, for this most important date.

^r The same peculiar construction, and the same words, in I Chron. 28:14 ff.

^s Concerning these officers, see above, XXIV, 246 f.

these accordingly aided the people and the house of God. **Neh. 7**⁷⁰ And some of the chief of the fathers made donations to the work. The Tirshatha^t gave into the treasury a thousand drachmas^u in gold, fifty basins, thirty priests' garments, and five hundred [minas of silver].^v ⁷¹ And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasury of the work^w twenty thousand drachmas of gold, and two thousand and two hundred minas of silver. ⁷² And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachmas of gold, two thousand minas of silver, and sixty-seven priests' garments.

^{73a} And the priests, the Levites, the porters, and the singers, some of the people, and the Nethinim, even all Israel, dwelt in their cities.^x

THE READING OF THE LAW

(Neh. 7:73b—8:18)

7^{73b} And when the seventh month was come, the children of Israel being in their cities,^y **8**¹ all the people assembled as one man at the open place before the water gate;^z and they sent word to Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which Yahwè had commanded to Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ And he read in it, over against the open place before the water gate, from early morning until midday, before the men and women and all who could understand; and the ears of all the

October 1

^t That is, the governor of Judea. The Chronicler employs the title in Ezr. 2:63, Neh. 7:65, 8:9, and (probably) 10:2; in these passages, also, as a non-committal designation, *the name not being given*. "Nehemiah" in 8:9 and 10:2 is an interpolation; see the notes on the two passages.

^u Observe the Greek word.

^v It is probable, as many have observed, that the words קָסָה מִיָּיִם originally stood between וְ and דָּמָשׁ.

^w With this whole passage cf. I Chron. 29:6 ff. (obviously the work of the same hand!), II Chron. 29:31 ff., 35:7 ff.

^x Cf. I Chron. 9:2 and Ezr. 2:1 (end)! Our text of the verse is probably just what the Chronicler wrote.

^y Compare I Chron. 13:2, which is an instructive parallel.

^z See above, pp. 199, 213; and compare also II Chron. 5:3, 29:4.

people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood^a which had been made for the purpose; and there stood beside him Mattathiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, and Zechariah.^b ⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above the people), and as he opened it they all stood up. ⁶Then Ezra blessed Yahwè, the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, amen, lifting up their hands, and they bowed down and worshiped Yahwè with their faces to the ground. ⁷Moreover Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah, the Levites,^c instructed the people in the law, while all remained in their places. ⁸And they read in the book of the law distinctly,^d and gave the sense, so that the reading was understood.

⁹And the Tirshatha,^e and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites who taught the people, said to all the people: This day is holy unto Yahwè your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰They^f also said to them: Go, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to him that hath no provision; for this day is holy unto our Lord. And be ye not distressed; for the joy of Yahwè is your

^aCf. the brazen pulpit used by Solomon on a similar occasion, II Chron. 6:13 (not in Kings). Just as Neh. 7:70-72 is repeated from I Chron. 29:6-8, so the whole scene in Neh. 8 is, in its main features, a repetition of the one pictured in II Chron., chaps. 5-7. See my *Composition*, p. 59.

^bNeither Greek version gives "Meshullam," and it obviously originated in a marginal variant of מְשֻׁלָּם or מְשָׁלָם. These *twelve* names are intended as those of laymen; cf. 10:15-28, and Ezr. 10:25-43.

^cOmit 7. The number of these names was probably *twelve* originally, but there is no good ground for emending the text. In Theodotion's original, the resemblance of יִמִּין to יִיִּים (מב) had caused the accidental omission of eleven words.

^dThe usage elsewhere, and the evident intent of the grammatical connection here, combine to render this meaning certain.

^eThe words נְחֵמְיָה הוּא are a later addition, as the old Greek version shows. See the note on 7:70. Theodotion's original had simply *substituted* the name "Nehemiah," both here and in 10:2.

^fThird pers. sing. for indefinite subject, as very often elsewhere. So also vs. 18.

strength. ¹¹And the Levites quieted all the people, saying: Be still, for the day is holy; neither be ye distressed. ¹²So all the people went away, to eat and drink, and to send portions, and to make great rejoicing, for they gave heed to the things which had been told them.

¹³Then were assembled |^g on the following day the chief of the October 2 fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even that they might give attention to the words of the law. ¹⁴And they found written in the law, that Yahwè had given command, through Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the festival of the seventh month; ¹⁵and that they should proclaim^b and publish in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying: Go forth to the mountain, and bring olive branches, and branches of wild olive, also of the myrtle, and the palm, and other leafy trees, in order to make booths according to the prescription. ¹⁶So the people went forth, and brought them; and they made for themselves booths, upon their own roofs, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; also in the open places before the water gate and the gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷And all the congregation, those who had returned from the captivity,ⁱ made booths and dwelt in them; for the children of Israel had not done thus from the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day.^k And there was very great rejoicing. ¹⁸And they read in the book

^gHere ends the fragment originally plucked from the middle of the old Greek translation, and known to us as "First Esdras." See XXIII, 141.

^hA good example of the Chronicler's careless way of narrating (cf. above, XXIV, 229). What here follows is, of course, *not* what they found in the law, but what Ezra said to those who had come to him. (It is possible, to be sure, that the original text had **וַיִּאמֶר אֶשֶׁר** in place of **וַיֹּאמֶר**.)

ⁱCf. Ezr. 6:21, 8:35.

^kMeaning, of course, that the festival had not before been observed so universally and completely, since the time of Joshua. The statement is merely a parallel to the one found in II Chron. 35:18. The Chronicler had several times, in the earlier history, mentioned the celebration of this festival, and with emphasis. See not only Ezr. 3:4, but especially II Chron. 7:8 ff., 8:13, in both of which passages he has deliberately altered the text of Kings. He could not possibly have put into his book, here in the Ezra story, a flat contradiction of the statement which he had previously made with so evidently studied purpose.

of the law of God day by day, from the first day unto the last.

October 22 So they observed the feast seven days, and on the eighth day was a festal assembly, according to the ordinance.

THE EXPULSION OF THE GENTILE WIVES

(Ezr. 9:1—10:44)

Ezr. 9 ¹Now when these things were finished, the chief men
November(?) drew near to me, saying: The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land, with¹ all their abominations, namely the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. ²For they have taken of their daughters, for themselves and for their sons, and thus the holy race hath been mixed^m with the peoples of the land. Moreover, the hand of the chief men and the rulers hath been foremost in this trespass. ³When I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my cloak, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat as though stunned. ⁴Then were assembled unto me all those that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the trespass of the men of the exile; but I continued sitting as though stunned, until the evening offering. ⁵And at the time of the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my cloak rent; and I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto Yahwè my God.ⁿ ⁶And I said: O my God, I am confounded and ashamed to lift up^o my face unto thee; for our sins have multiplied exceedingly,^p and our guilt hath mounted high as the heavens. ⁷Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty, unto

¹ I believe that the reading of our text (with כ) is correct. This is probably one of the Chronicler's ellipses.

^m Cf. Ps. 106:35, and especially Neh. 9:2, 13:3. (In the last-named passage Meyer, *Entstehung*, p. 130, would emend to "Arabs"!)

ⁿ Cf. II Chron. 6:13. This part of the Ezra story is written in the Chronicler's liveliest style—not, however, a whit more lively than 10:1-14, where the story is told of Ezra in the third person. See above, pp. 199, 212. The prayer which follows is also thoroughly characteristic.

^o With the peculiar interjection of אלהי at this point, cf. the similar case in I Chron. 29:17.

^p The impossible אש is merely dittography of the following אש.

this day; and for our sins, we, our kings, and our priests, have been given into the power of the kings of the lands, for slaughter, for captivity, for plundering, and for humiliation, as at this day. ⁸But now for a moment grace hath been given from Yahwè our God, to save for us a remnant, and to give us a secure fastening in his holy place; that our God may restore the light to our eyes, and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. ⁹For bondservants we are;^a yet in our bondage our God hath not forsaken us, but hath extended to us favor in the sight of the kings of Persia, to grant us a reviving, to raise up the house of our God, and to repair its ruins, and to give us a wall of protection^r in Judea and Jerusalem. ¹⁰Now therefore, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, ¹¹which thou didst command by thy servants the prophets, saying:^s The land which ye are entering, to possess it, is a land foul with the filth of the heathen peoples, with their abominations, since they have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. ¹²Now therefore give not your daughters to their sons, nor take for your sons their daughters, nor seek their peace or their welfare, for ever;^t that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and make it the perpetual inheritance of your children.^u ¹³And after all that hath come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great guilt,—and yet thou, O our God, hast spared us, punishing^v less than our sins deserve, and hast given us such a remnant as this,—¹⁴shall we again break thy commandments, and intermarry with the people of these abominations? Wouldest thou not be angry with us to the point of cutting us off without residue or remnant? ¹⁵O Yahwè, God of Israel, thou dealest righteously, that we are left a remnant

^aCf. especially Neh. 9:36.

^rThis is of course figurative!

^sThe manner of the following quotation, given as from "the Prophets" (by which word he means primarily *Moses*) and not truly representing any single passage, is exactly what we have already noticed in II Chron. 36:21 (see the note, XXIV, 12). The Chronicler quotes as he writes—carelessly and irresponsibly.

^tAll this is a most instructive example of misquotation!

^uCf. I Chron. 28:8 (not in Sam.-Kings).

^vThe Hebrew contains one of the Chronicler's ellipses.

as at this day; behold we are before thee in our guilt, for none can stand before thee because of this.

10¹ Now while Ezra^w prayed and made confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the house of God, there were assembled unto him a very great congregation of the people of Israel, men, women, and children; moreover the people wept exceedingly. ²Then Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, said to Ezra: We have trespassed against our God, and have married foreign women of the peoples of the land; yet even now there is hope for Israel, in spite of this. ³Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God, to put away all such wives,^x and the children born of them, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God;^y and let obedience be given to the law.^z ⁴Arise, for the matter resteth upon thee, and we are with thee; stand firm, and do it. ⁵So Ezra arose, and made the chief men of the priests, of the Levites, and of all Israel, swear that they would do according to this word. So they took oath.

⁶Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God, and went to the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib,^a and there he passed the night;^b he ate no bread, nor drank water, for he was mourning because of the trespass of the men of the exile. ⁷And they made proclamation throughout Judea and Jerusalem, to all those of the exile, that they should assemble at Jerusalem; ⁸and

^wThe reason for the use of the third person in this chapter is simply this, that when the Chronicler sat down to write it he did not happen to identify himself, in imagination, with his hero. On the next occasion, in another mood, he might write in the first person; he was under no obligation to write always in the same way. See the remarks above, pp. 210 f.

^xThe qualifying "such" is of course understood from the context. The article is omitted just as in 1:11 (see my note, XXIV, 17) and in vs. 17 of this chapter.

^yThat is: after my lord (Ezra) shall have consulted with the more devout of the leaders of Israel. See vs. 5.

^zNamely, the law *which had just been read*, and *from which the "chief men"* (cf. 9:1 with Neh. 8:13) *had learned of the prohibition of foreign marriages*. See the introductory remarks, above.

^aSee the introductory remarks at the beginning of this chapter.

^bReading *וַיֵּלֶךְ* instead of *וַיֵּשֶׁב*.

that whoever did not come within three specified^c days, according to the counsel of the chief men and the elders, all his property should be forfeited, and he himself separated from the congregation of the exile.

⁹Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within the three days; it was^d the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. And all the people sat in the open place before the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and because of the storms of rain. ¹⁰Then Ezra the priest arose, and said to them: Ye have trespassed, and have married foreign women, adding this to the guilt of Israel. ¹¹Now therefore make confession to Yahwè, the God of your fathers, and do his will; and separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the foreign wives. ¹²Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice: Thus, according to thy word, it is our duty to do. ¹³But the people are many, and this is a time of heavy rains, so that we cannot remain out of doors. Moreover it is not a work of one day, nor of two; for very many of us have sinned in this manner. ¹⁴Let our chief men (that is, of all the congregation)^e be stationed here, and let all those in our cities who have taken foreign wives come to them at stated times, and with them the elders and judges^f of their several cities; to the end that we may turn back from us the wrath of our God because of^g this thing. (¹⁵Nevertheless Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahzeiah the son of Tikwah stood against this counsel, and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite seconded them.)^h ¹⁶And the people of the

December 20

^c If the definite article is original here (הַיָּמִים), this must be its meaning. That is, three days were appointed during which the men were to present themselves at Jerusalem for registration.

^d Nothing is missing here! Cf. 7:8 and 6:15, and see my note (XXIV, p. 269) on the latter passage. This is a common and thoroughly Semitic construction.

^e Cf. Neh. 9:32, II Chron. 23:4, 28:15, etc. The ל explaining the suffix, as so often in Arabic.

^f Cf. II Chron. 15:3, 19:5, Ezra 7:10, 25 f., and see above, p. 203.

^g Read עַל הַדָּבָר, with Jerome, Theodotion (cf. vs. 9), and, almost certainly, the old Greek version (the περί of the L text, I Esdr. 9:13, is presumably derived from Theodotion, however).

^h The Chronicler's imagination delighted in creating such incidents, as I have already shown with abundant illustration. Cf. also II Chron. 30:10 f., 18, I Chron. 21:6, Neh. 7:61-65, as well as such passages as II Chron. 28:12, etc.

exile did so. Ezra the priest andⁱ certain chief men according to their families, all designated by name, were set apart; and they
 January 1 were in session on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. ¹⁷And they finished with all the men^k who had mar-
 April 1 ried foreign women by the first day of the first month.

¹⁸And there were found among the sons of the priests, who had married foreign women: of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren;^l Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. ¹⁹They gave their pledge that they would put away their wives; and for their trespass they were fined^m a ram of the flock. ²⁰And of the sons of Immer; Hanani and Zebediah. (*Then follows, in vss. 21-43, the remainder of the list.*) "All these had taken foreign wives; and they sent them back (to their people), both wives and children."ⁿ

THE COVENANT AGAINST GENTILE MARRIAGES AND IN SUPPORT OF THE CLERGY

(Neh. 9:1-10:40)

Neh. 9 ¹Now on the twenty-fourth^o day of this month the children of Israel assembled, fasting, and in sackcloth, and with earth upon their heads. ²And the seed of Israel separated them-

ⁱRead **וְאֲנָשִׁים**, with Theodotion and Jerome. The old Greek (= **וְיִבְדְּלוּ לוֹ**) also gives sure evidence that the original verb was **וְיִבְדְּלוּ**, for **לוֹ** is impossible here. This latter blunder ultimately produced the text of which the translation (presumably by Aquila or Symmachus) has in this verse supplanted the rendering of Theodotion in the bizarre L recension.

^kRead **בְּכָל אָנָשִׁים**. The Chronicler omits the article here exactly as he does in vs. 3 and in 1:1; see the notes on these passages.

^lSee Note A, at the end of the chapter.

^m**אָשָׁם**, like the Syriac **مُذْنِبٌ**, may take a direct object. On the elliptical clause (very characteristic) see XXIV, 270, note k.

ⁿThe original was **וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ בָנִים וְיָקִים בָּנִים**. By an easy accident, the two letters **בֵּ** were dropped from the first word. The resulting **וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ**, which was absolutely impossible, naturally produced the variant, **וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ**. In our MT *both* of these readings are ingeniously used; the latter at the beginning of the clause, and the former, **וַיִּשְׁבְּעוּ**, inserted before **וּבְנֵיהֶם**. (For a similar case of ingenuity in combining two variant *Greek* readings, see the L text of Neh. 13:20.) The old Greek version, I Esdr. 9:36, renders the Hebrew which I have conjectured. See further, on the restoration of this verse, Note A, at the end of this chapter.

^oObserve the multiple of *twelve*; see the note on Ezr. 8:31, and also p. 213.

selves from all foreigners;^p and they took their places, and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. ³And they stood up in their places, and read in the book of the law of Yahwè their God for a fourth part of the day; and for another fourth part they made confession, and worshiped Yahwè their God. 'Then Jeshua and the sons^q of Kadmiel, (namely) Shechaniah,^q Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, stood upon the elevated place of the Levites and cried with a loud voice unto Yahwè their God. ⁵Also the Levites, Hashabneiah,^q Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said: Come,^r bless Yahwè your God. [And Ezra said: Blessed art thou, Yahwè our God,^s] from everlasting to everlasting; and blessed be thy name, glorious and^t exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶Thou, Yahwè, art (God) alone. Thou hast made the heavens, the heaven^u of heavens, and all their host; the earth, and all creatures that are upon it; the seas, and all things that are in them. Thou givest life to them all, and to thee the host of heaven boweth down. (*Then follows, in vss. 7-37, the remainder of the prayer, the last words of which are these:*) ³⁶Behold, we are vassals today; and as for the land which thou gavest to our fathers, to eat its fruit and its good things, we are bondmen upon it. ³⁷It^v bringeth forth its

^pIt is obvious that this is the immediate sequel of Ezr. 9:1-10:44. Cf. with this clause especially Ezr. 9:1 and 10:11; and see, further, the introductory remarks.

^qOn the text of this verse and the following, see Note B, at the end of the chapter.

^rIt is possible that קומי is to be taken here in its literal meaning "stand up;" but more probably it means simply "up! come!" as in II Chron. 6:41, Ezr. 10:4, and many other passages; i. e., it is used here just as נס is used in the parallel I Chron. 29:20.

^sConcerning the lacuna here, see Note C, at the end of the chapter.

^tThe conjunction, to which some have objected, is quite in place. The construction which is *virtually* adjectival is continued by one which is *really* such.

^uThose who would emend here (and in many similar places) by inserting the conjunction ו, should bear in mind that the Chronicler is fond of enumerating in the Aramaic way, omitting the conjunction in every place but the last.

^vWith the Chronicler's characteristic omission of the subject; cf. the note on Ezr. 10:19.

abundant produce for the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; they have power also over our persons and our cattle, at their pleasure. Yea, we are in great distress.^w

10 ¹In consequence of all this^x we made an abiding covenant, in writing, and to sign it^y stood our princes, our Levites, and our priests; ²and at the head of the signers^z were the Tirshatha^z and Zedekiah.^z ³Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah; ⁴Pashhur, etc. (*Then follows, in vss. 4-28, the remainder of the list.*)^a ²⁹And the rest of the people, and of^b the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, and the Nethinim, even all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the land unto the law of God, with their wives and their sons and daughters, all who had knowledge and understanding,^c ³⁰stood fast by their brethren, their leaders, and entered into a curse and an oath, to walk in the law of God, which was given through Moses the servant of God, and to keep and perform all the commandments of Yahwè our Lord, and his ordinances and his statutes: ³¹to wit,

^wThe closing part of this prayer is strikingly similar to the close of the prayer in Ezr. 9. Vss. 33-37 here are the expanded counterpart of vss. 9, 13, and 15 there. The prayer in Neh. includes also supplication for mercy (vs. 32). Neh. 10:1 (9:38 in the English version) is *not* a part of the prayer, but the resumption of the narrative. It is not strange that some scholars should have thought the transition here "abrupt;" it is smoothness itself, however, compared to this same writer's transitions in I Chron. 28:19 (!), Ezr. 2:68, 7:27 (!), Neh. 12:27; to say nothing of the many places where he leaps from the first person to the third, or *vice versa*, without apparent occasion.

^xI. e., all the events narrated in the preceding chapter and in Ezr. 9f. This covenant gave the finishing touch to *Ezra's reform*. The words רבכל זאז give a very natural continuation.

^yEvidently the technical term.

^zOn the text and interpretation of this verse and the preceding, see Note D, at the end of the chapter.

^aOn the *number* of the names, one of the Chronicler's multiples of twelve, see Note D, at the end of the chapter.

^bThe construction so often found in the Chronicler's writings; see Ezr. 8:29, 10:5, etc.

^cThis verse, which betrays the Chronicler's authorship with almost every phrase, fairly represents the whole chapter. From this point on to the end, we can recognize everywhere his peculiar style and diction, and his own special hobbies. Those who know his writings intimately will see this at once, for it is beyond all question; those who are not thus prepared will do well to read II Chron. 31:4-19 first of all.

that we would not give our daughters to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; ³²and that whenever the peoples of the land should bring their merchandise or any sort of grain on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not take it from them, on the sabbath or on a holy day; and that we would forego the product^d of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt. ³³Moreover we imposed upon ourselves stated contributions,^e charging ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel, for the service of the house of our God; ³⁴for the showbread, the continual meal offering, and the continual burnt offering, as well as the offerings of the sabbaths and the new moons; for the feasts, the holy sacrifices,^f and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel; even for all the work of the house of our God. ³⁵Also we cast lots, the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at appointed times year by year, to burn on the altar of Yahwè our God, as is prescribed in the law;^g ³⁶and (we covenanted) to bring the first fruits of our land, and the first of every sort of fruit of any tree, year by year, to the house of Yahwè; ³⁷also the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, as is prescribed in the law; and that we would bring the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, for the priests who minister in the house of our God; ³⁸and that the best of our coarse meal, and of our heaps of grain(?),^h and of the fruit of every tree, the

^dIt is obvious that the word תְּבִיאָת has been accidentally omitted, by haplography, after אֵלֶּה; see Ex. 23:10 f. and Lev. 25:3-7, the passages which the Chronicler had in mind. The law of the debtor's release, to which he refers, is of course Deut. 15:1-3.

^eSo also in 13:5, and in the post-Biblical usage.

^fNamely those described in II Chron. 29:33 and 35:13.

^gThis is a very good example of the Chronicler's heedless and irresponsible mode of citation, giving merely what he happened to remember, or thought he remembered. See above, the notes on II Chron. 36:21 (XXIV, 12) and Ezr. 9:11. Neh. 8:14 is another most instructive instance.

On the text of this verse Bertholet, *Comm.*, says: "L. nach LXX ἢ vor הלויים und st. לְבֵית אֲבֹתֵינוּ." This is curious textual criticism.

^hRead וְעֵרְמִתֵּינוּ in place of וְתִרְמִתֵּינוּ? The accidental substitution of the latter word would then be very natural in view of Num. 15:20 f., etc. In the text which lay before Theodotion the word had been canceled as corrupt. The supposition of a gloss has not much likelihood.

wine and the oil, we would bring for the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; also the tithes of our land for the Levites;—and they, the Levites, were to reckon the tithes in all the cities of our tillage,³⁹ and theⁱ priest the son of Aaron was to be with the Levites when they reckoned the tithes; and the Levites were to bring up the tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers belonging to the treasury; ⁴⁰for unto the chambers were the children of Israel and the sons of Levi to bring^k the offering of corn, and wine, and oil, and there also were the utensils of the sanctuary, and of^l the priests who minister, and of the porters and the singers;^m—and that we would not forsake the house of our God.ⁿ

NOTE A (on Ezr. 10:44)

There can be no doubt whatever that the original intent of this verse is expressed in I Esdr. 9:36, according to which I have restored the Hebrew text. The plan proposed, in Ezr. 10:3, 5, was to put away both the wives and the children. A complete census, town by town, was to be taken; every Israelite who failed to appear before the authorities was to be expelled from the congregation (vs. 8). The people agreed (vs. 12), and also acted according to the agreement (vs. 16). “By the first day of the

ⁱ Are we to regard the use of the article here as evidence that this was the custom followed in the Chronicler's own day?

^k The contradiction which many recent commentators have found in vss. 38-40 vanishes when they are understood as here indicated. It is not even necessary to appeal to II Chron. 31:5-7. This whole passage, however, is very characteristic of the Chronicler's loose-jointed way of thinking and writing.

^l The usual construction; see the note on vs. 29.

^m The status of these Levitical classes is the very same in all parts of Chron.-Ezr.-Neh.—the writer being generally at no pains to express himself exactly. See my *Composition*, pp. 22f.; also above, p. 202, note 40—and Bertholet's *Comm.*, on Neh. 11:17 f.!

ⁿ The verb (נָתַן) in this last clause concludes the construction begun by נָתַן in vs. 31, and continued by נָקַח and נָשַׂא in vs. 32, and נָבִיא in vs. 38. The Chronicler intended this whole passage, vss. 31-40, to give the substance of his “abiding covenant” (אֲמִנָה, vs. 1), and he ends it with a clause which both sums up the preceding details and also forms a highly suitable close to the whole Ezra story. Notice that he ends his expanded story of Nehemiah in a very similar manner (13:31!).

first month" *all* of those who had married foreign women had appeared before the judges (vs. 17). The members of the leading priestly house are first mentioned, and it is said of them that *they* agreed to put away their wives of foreign birth (vs. 19). Then follows, without any other introduction, the remainder of the list. At its close must therefore have stood, in some form, the statement that *these all* put away their wives (and presumably the children also would be mentioned); no other continuation is possible. Furthermore, the immediate sequel in Neh. 9 f. asserts again that they did separate themselves completely, not only from the heathen wives and their children (10:29-31), but also from all the other foreigners (9:2, cf. especially Ezr. 9:1, 10:11). And yet our commentators and historians all wonder whether Ezra's reform was pictured as successful!

The Chronicler does, indeed, represent this evil of mixed marriages as present once more (in a few cases) in the time of Nehemiah, a dozen years later. The fact that he does so shows his own great interest in the subject, and that he realized the impossibility of preventing such alliances entirely; it also, no doubt, may be taken as an indication that the Jews in his day were *not* as exclusive as he wished to see them.

NOTE B (on Neh. 9:4 f.)

It is generally agreed that the lists of Levites given in verses 4 and 5 have been corrupted through copyists' errors. The chief reason for the corruption is, obviously, the fact that the one list follows the other so immediately, while each is introduced by the word הַלְוִיִּם. The presence of *three* names written בְּנֵי in vs. 4 is more than suspicious, and without much doubt the first of the three was originally יְבִנְיָ or בֶּן. It was the influence of the similar list in the preceding chapter (8:7) which caused the reading of the name "Bani" here, very naturally. Theodotion rendered: Ἰησοῦς καὶ υἱοὶ Καδμῆλ, Σαχανία¹⁶ υἱὸς Σαραβία,¹⁷ υἱὸς

¹⁶ The Hexaplar MSS., S and B, have here the blunder Σαραβία. The coincidence of the A text with that of L (Σεχενίας) proves that Theodotion read שַׁכְנִיָּה. In the names immediately following, L has been conformed to MT, as usual.

¹⁷ The very inferior character of the Hexaplar text is always apparent, from the beginning of I Chronicles to the end of Nehemiah; and the most corrupt form of it, in nine cases out of ten, is that given by Codex B.

Xavav, but this is plainly the rendering of a text which is inferior to MT. For the "sons of Kadmiel," cf. Ezr. 2:40 and Neh. 7:43 (the text of the former passage probably correct, that of the latter certainly corrupt).¹⁸ The possibility must not be overlooked that the original reading was "Jeshua *the son of* Kadmiel;" see Neh. 12:24.

The fact that "Shebaniah" appears also in vs. 5 makes it extremely probable that Theodotion is right with his "Shechaniah" in vs. 4; see above.

The first three names in vs. 5 came from vs. 4 (or a variant of it). The accident in copying was due to proximity *plus* the fact that the word הלויים immediately precedes. The name "Hashabneiah" is very likely a copyist's error for "Hashabiah," the man referred to in 12:24 as a "*chief of the Levites*."

The whole number of the Levite assistants on this occasion was eleven. The six named in vs. 4 began the ceremony with an invocation; then the five named in vs. 5 called upon the people to unite in prayer. The prayer was offered by Ezra, who thus joined himself, in a way, to the Levites of vs. 5, making the number of those conducting the ceremony to be *twelve* in all. Cf. especially 12:36, where the Chronicler makes his Ezra join a company of the Levite "singers."

NOTE C (the lacuna in Neh. 9:5)

It has been quite generally recognized that something has been lost from our Hebrew text here, at the point where the long prayer begins. Theodotion's Greek prefixes *καὶ εἶπεν* "Eḗpas to the first words of vs. 6; and it is indeed obvious that some one man (and presumably Ezra) must have been named as the speaker of the following words, which occupy more than thirty verses. But it is even plainer that whatever lacuna there is must be sought further back than the end of vs. 5. The words שֵׁם כְּבוֹד, "*thy glorious name*," in the last clause of this verse, originally formed, beyond question, a part of the same address to Yahwè which is continued in vs. 6. The immediately preceding verb,

¹⁸ Guthe, in the *Polychrome Bible*, gives us a most astonishing "emendation" of Ezr. 2:40 based on one of the blunders of the Greek text in Codex B (in I Esdr. 5:26), where some careless copyist had converted the tachygram of *καὶ* (ς) into ις. With this help, Guthe restores the preposition *εἰς*, which is made to govern the genitive case.

וַיְבָרְכוּ, “*and let thy glorious name be blessed*” (literally, “*and let them bless;*” the common Aramaic use of the indefinite third person plural in place of the passive), shows the same thing. Moreover, the four words preceding this, מִן הָעוֹלָם עַד הָעוֹלָם, are now in a strange context; how could *these people* be exhorted to “stand up and bless Yahwè *from everlasting to everlasting*”? They were not immortal, and had not been eternal. Apparently, no one has ever studied this verse carefully, for the explanation of the difficulty is clear almost at the first glance. The Chronicler is drawing a large part of his devotional material from the Psalms, as usual. This particular form of words, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם, is found elsewhere only in the doxology appended to Psalms 41 and 106, and *quoted from the latter Psalm by the Chronicler in I Chron. 16:36*. The 106th Psalm is not only the Chronicler’s favorite (see especially I Chron. 16:34–36, 41, II Chron. 5:13, 7:3, 20:21, Ezr. 3:11), but it is also one from which he is quoting in this very prayer; see especially vss. 27 f., where it is obvious that we have, in the main, a free reproduction of Ps. 106:41–45 (with some very characteristic changes, such as רַבּוֹת עֲתִידִים instead of פַּעַמִּים רַבּוֹת). The theme on which the Psalm is built is precisely the one which the Chronicler is developing here; and it is therefore most fitting that its doxology should be used by him as the introduction of the prayer. When in addition to these facts it is observed how in another favorite Psalm this doxology, slightly varied (Ps. 72:18), is continued in the words (vs. 19): “*and blessed be his glorious name (שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ) for ever*,” there can no longer be any question as to the position of the lacuna and the reason for the accidental omission. The original text is to be restored as follows: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַלְוִיִּם . . . קוּמוּ, בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה: אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. [וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲזָרָא: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.] מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם; וַיְבָרְכוּ וְגו’. The cause of the accident was the usual one: the very close resemblance of the omitted words to those immediately preceding them. In the Hebrew text which lay before Theodotion the words וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲזָרָא had been restored (in the wrong place, necessarily) simply because it was well known that they had once stood at the beginning of the prayer; there is no other satisfactory way of explaining

their presence.¹⁹ It is barely possible that the τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν of the Greek is the veritable translation of אֱלֹהֵינוּ (in which case we should have either to regard the אֱלֹהֵיכֶם of our MT as the result of correction or corruption, or else to suppose that a similar accidental omission took place in the Greek version); but in view of the thousands of cases of confusion of ἡμῶν and ὑμῶν by Greek scribes it is much more likely that we have to do with a mere copyist's error. As for the original extent of the passage omitted from the Hebrew, it is not probable that it contained anything more than the words here restored.

There is one other very striking parallel to be noticed. In I Chron., chaps. 28 f. (not in Sam.-Kings), the Chronicler depicts a scene somewhat resembling the one which he has constructed here in his story of Ezra. All the people are assembled at Jerusalem, and David the king offers prayer before them. He calls upon them to "bless Yahwè," using the very words which are uttered by the Levites in Neh. 9:5; though in I Chron. 29:20 the command בְּרִכּוּ נָא אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם follows the prayer instead of preceding it. The prayer itself begins with the words (29:10): וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד: בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל; and then continues in much the same way as Neh. 9:6. The Chronicler loves to repeat the incidents, and the set phrases, which he has already used.

NOTE D (on Neh. 10:1 f.)

It is not strange that the use of the participle in 10:1 (לְרִתִּים, לְתָבִים) should have misled some translators, ancient and modern, into connecting the verse with the preceding prayer; all the more because the first person plural has just been used there, while in the introductory narrative, 9:1-5, the first person was *not* used. But it is certain that the verse is narrative; this would be sufficiently evident, indeed, even if it were not directly continued in vss. 29 f. by the same narrating participle (בְּחַיִּים, בְּאִים) and by the first person plural ("our Lord;," "*we* would not give *our* daughters," etc.). This whole

¹⁹ It was a somewhat similar case when the three chapters, Neh. 8-10, were transposed again to the book of Ezra, in the recension represented by our I Esdras, and attached in the wrong place (necessarily). The thing was done simply because it was well known that they had once formed a part of the Ezra story.

passage affords one of the very best illustrations of the Chronicler's intolerably heedless way of carrying on a story; the best single parallels are perhaps I Chron. 28:19, Ezr. 7:27, and (carelessness of another sort) Neh. 13:1, 6.

In vs. 2, it is obvious that **הַחֹתָמִים** is impossible, and equally obvious (see, for example, the English versions!) that the plural number refers to the signers who are named in the following verses.²⁰ The original reading must have been **הַחֹתָמָה**, active participle, "those who sealed" the document. It may well be that Theodotion, who renders by *ἐπὶ τῶν σφραγιζόντων*, actually had this reading before him; we should have expected him otherwise to render by *ἐσφραγισμένων*, cf. the variant introduced into the text of Codex **N** by the corrector of the seventh century.²¹ Our massoretic reading, **עַל הַחֹתָמִים**, is the result of a *lapsus calami* caused by the **עַל הַחֹתָמִים** in the line above.

The name "Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah" is an interpolation; see the notes, above, on 7:70 and 8:9. The text as originally written by the Chronicler contained here only **תִּרְשָׁתָה**, "the Tirshatha." The interpolation is the same one which has been made in several other places, as one of the inevitable results of the transplanting of the three chapters of the Ezra story into the book of Nehemiah. In our Hebrew text, it has taken place also in 8:9, and in both cases the interpolated name "Nehemiah" stands side by side with the original "Tirshatha." In the Hebrew text rendered by Theodotion, the process had gone so far that the unfamiliar word "Tirshatha" had been dropped altogether.²² In a few Greek manuscripts, moreover—notably in Codex B—the same thing has taken place even in 7:70(!), "Nehemiah" being simply substituted for "Tirshatha." In the old Greek version, on the contrary, the original reading, containing the title but not the name, is preserved in 8:9 (I Esdr. 9:49); and if we possessed the rest of this version we should doubtless find the same thing true in 10:2. Yet even earlier than the date of

²⁰ The desperate expedient of making the plural refer to a plural number of documents, or to the things (1) contained in the document, gives no help.

²¹ See *Studies in Mem. of W. R. Harper*, II, 92, note 38.

²² The *ὁ καὶ Ἀθαρσῆς* of the L text in Neh. 10:2(1) is, of course, merely one of the Lucianic corrections from the massoretic Hebrew.

this translation, probably soon after the transposition of the chapters, the interpolation of the name "Nehemiah" began; a fact which receives very interesting illustration in the presence of Νεεμίας in I Esdr. 5:40(!).²³

The "Zedekiah" of this verse is a character created simply in order to provide a companion for the anonymous "Tirshatha." The Chronicler did not know who the governor of Judea was during the first part of the reign of this Artaxerxes, and did not venture to give him a name; but it would not do *to appear not to know* who he was, hence the name of his associate, צדקיה, "at the head of" the list of signers. It may have been the case that he thought of the governor as a Persian, and wished to put beside him a representative of the people; but it seems more likely, on the contrary, that the official who had contributed so magnificently to the treasury of the temple (7:70), and then shortly after had helped Ezra instruct the people in the religion of Israel (8:9), and who now pledged himself to follow the law of Moses, to keep his family free from intermarriage with foreigners (10:31), and to show himself in all things a faithful member of "the congregation," was thought of as a Jew. Whether the Chronicler intended his "Zedekiah" to be a prince, or a private secretary, is a question of very slight importance, and one which it will never be possible to answer. The reason why Ezra's name does not appear among the signers is of course this, that he was regarded as above the necessity of taking this oath, which had in it something of the nature of a confession of evil-doing (see 9:1 f., 10:29 f., and בכל זאת in 10:1). The man who had come all the way from Babylonia in order to call the Jews to account for their neglect of the Pentateuch (Ezr. 7:14!), and under whose vehement rebuke they were now making this solemn promise to return to the right path, certainly had no need to sign the document.

The *number of the names* of the signers (החותמים) calls for especial notice. This written covenant, according to the repre-

²³ The tendency to interpolate the name of the unnamed official, especially when he was believed to have been so important a person as Nehemiah or Zerubbabel, was of course very strong at all times. We see several instances of exactly this sort—interesting parallels to those just described—in I Esdr. 6:17, 26, 28, in all three of which verses the name Ζωροβαβελ has been interpolated for the purpose of identifying the "governor" who is mentioned.

sentation of the Chronicler, marked an epoch in the history of Israel. The document was one, moreover, which contained a summary of his own pet interests, and those who signed it were the representatives of a community reformed according to his ideals. It is, therefore, a foregone conclusion that the number of names will be found to be a multiple of twelve; just as in his "great list," in Ezr. 2 and Neh. 7, he starts off with twelve "leaders" (Ezr. 2:2, Neh. 7:7), and makes the whole number of the people equal to twelve times the number of years which had elapsed since the creation of the world (see above, p. 216). Here in Neh. 10:2-28 the numbering is as follows: two leaders; twenty-one priests; seventeen Levites; forty-four laymen. Total, eighty-four. $84 = 7 \times 12$.